



## OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL

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Honourable Selina Robinson  
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills  
PO Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Via: [PSFS.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PSFS.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

January 31, 2024

Dear Minister Robinson,

As the aviation sector emerges from COVID-19, and is faced with labour and skills shortages, including acute difficulty attracting and retaining workers in key aviation occupations, the trajectory of B.C.'s aviation sector could benefit from government support. Among the key actions governments may take in support of the sector is the refreshment of the provincial aviation sector strategy, the review of grant and aid tools, and prioritization of this critical industry considering new federal immigration requirements.

**Education involvement in the aviation sector strategy:** The BC aviation strategy as communicated in *Connecting with the World: An Aviation Strategy for British Columbia* is worthy of revisiting. The 2012 report provides a vision, but consolidated reporting thereafter appears sparse. As well this revitalization has been flagged as key in supporting industry in a 2023 report prepared on behalf of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. We encourage your ministry to be involved in the formation of this plan to ensure the alignment of educational support needed to create the skilled labour force necessary to realize this strategy.

**Review of grant and aid tools:** An examination of the funding tools available for students entering the aviation sector is needed given the barriers to entering the industry and the acute need for more workers. We understand that Transport Canada has held discussions with Employment and Social Development Canada on improving and standardizing access to student grants and loans which vary considerably by province. When looking at the high cost of training and need for professionals in the aviation industry we feel this is a space where the province can work to be proactive, and collaborative, in the alignment of its own grant and aid systems and would encourage the province to seek out a space in this conversation.

**New federal immigration requirements:** With recent announcements from the federal government that provinces and territories will be allocated a share of new study permits based on population and that Ottawa plans to require provinces and territories to provide students interested in studying in their region with attestation letters. We ask that your Ministry give due consideration to those educational streams that support our critical sectors, which include aviation, as this system is developed.

As you know, B.C. hosts some 37 licensed flight schools and aviation-specific training programs for a variety of career paths across a range of aviation focused occupations and industries. Here in Prince George, the city is home to YXS, a small international airport, the importance of which cannot be understated to the regional economy. As industry pressures continue to cause anxiety for small and rural routes, we ask your ministry to explore options to support the aviation sector and find it necessary to write in support of further examination.

Sincerely,

Prince George City Council

CC: Bobbi Plecas, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills  
Coralee Oakes, Member of the Legislative Assembly  
Shirley Bond, Member of the Legislative Assembly  
Mike Morris, Member of the Legislative Assembly

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<sup>i</sup> Connecting and growing B.C. regions, business, and industry: The socio-economic contribution of British Columbia's aviation and aerospace sector.